

Claims:

1. A method in a data processing system for collaboration, comprising the steps of:

5 receiving a first request to send a first question to a first recipient synchronously with a live session by a collaboration tool;

sending the first question if the first recipient is online with the live session;

receiving a second request from a sender to send a second question to a second recipient asynchronously with a live session by the collaboration tool;

10 queuing the second question if the sender is not online until the sender is online; and

sending the second question to the second recipient if the second recipient is online.

15 2. The method of claim 1, wherein sending the first question if the first recipient is online further comprises the steps of:

detecting the presence of the first recipient to determine if the first recipient is online; and

sending the question based on the determination.

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3. The method of claim 1, wherein sending the second question if the second recipient is online further comprises the steps of:

detecting the presence of the second recipient to determine if the second recipient is online; and

sending the question based on the determination.

5 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the first request is received via a graphical user interface, and wherein the second request is received via the same graphical user interface through which the first request was received.

10 5. The method of claim 1, wherein sending the first question further comprises the steps of:

 setting a level of privacy for the first question.

 6. The method of claim 1, wherein sending the first question further comprises the steps of:

15 setting a level of anonymity for the first question.

 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

 receiving the first question; and

 responding to the first question synchronously with the live session by sending an

20 answer.

 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

 receiving the first question; and

responding to the first question asynchronously with the live session.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein responding to the first question asynchronously further comprises the steps of:

- 5 detecting whether a sender of the response is online;
- sending the response when the sender is online;
- detecting the presence of a recipient of the response to determine whether the
- recipient is online;
- queuing the response if the recipient is not online; and
- 10 sending the response when the recipient is online.

10. A method in a data processing system for collaboration, comprising the steps of:

receiving a request to send a question either synchronously or asynchronously via a collaboration tool to a recipient, wherein the collaboration tool is capable of sending the
5 question synchronously and asynchronously;

determining whether the recipient is online; and

sending the question to the recipient via the collaboration tool when the recipient is online.

11. A method in a data processing system for collaboration, comprising the steps of:

receiving a first request to send a first file to a first recipient synchronously with a live session by a collaboration tool;

5 sending the first file if the first recipient is online with the live session;

receiving a second request from a sender to send a second file to a second recipient asynchronously with a live session by a collaboration tool;

queuing the second file if the sender is not online until the sender is online; and

sending the second file to the second recipient if the second recipient is online.

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12. The method of claim 11, wherein the first request is received via a graphical user interface, and wherein the second request is received via the same graphical user interface through which the first request was received.

15 13. The method of claim 11, wherein sending the first file if the recipient is online further comprises the steps of:

detecting the presence of the first recipient to determine whether the first recipient is online; and

queuing the first file until the first recipient is online.

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14. The method of claim 11, wherein sending the second file further comprises the steps of:

detecting the presence of the second recipient to determine whether the second recipient is online; and

queuing the second file until the second recipient is online.

15. A method in a data processing system for collaboration, comprising the steps of:

receiving a request to send a file either synchronously or asynchronously via a collaboration tool to a recipient, wherein the collaboration tool is capable of sending the question synchronously and asynchronously;

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determining whether the recipient is online; and
sending the question to the recipient via the collaboration tool when the recipient is online.

16. A data processing system for collaboration, comprising:

a memory comprising a program that receives a first request to send a first question to a first recipient synchronously with a live session by a collaboration tool, sends the first question if the first recipient is online with the live session, receives a second request from a sender to send a second question to a second recipient asynchronously with a live session by the collaboration tool, queues the second question if the sender is not online until the sender is online, and sends the second question to the second recipient if the second recipient is online; and

a processor for running the program.

17. The data processing system of claim 16, wherein sending the first question if the first recipient is online further comprises the steps of:

detecting the presence of the first recipient to determine if the first recipient is online; and

sending the question based on the determination.

18. The data processing system of claim 16, wherein sending the second question if the second recipient is online further comprises the steps of:

detecting the presence of the second recipient to determine if the second recipient is online; and

sending the question based on the determination.

19. The data processing system of claim 16, wherein the first request is received via a graphical user interface, and wherein the second request is received via the graphical user interface.

5 20. The data processing system of claim 16, wherein sending the first question further comprises the steps of:
 setting a level of privacy for the first question.

 21. The data processing system of claim 16, wherein sending the first question
 10 further comprises the steps of:
 setting a level of anonymity for the first question.

 22. The data processing system of claim 16, wherein the program further receives
 the first question, and responds to the first question synchronously with the live session
 15 by sending an answer.

 23. The data processing system of claim 16, wherein the program further receives
 the first question, and responds to the first question asynchronously with the live session.

20 24. The data processing system of claim 23, wherein responding to the first
 question asynchronously further comprises the steps of:
 detecting whether a sender of the response is online;
 sending the response when the sender is online;

detecting the presence of a recipient of the response to determine whether the recipient is online;

queuing the response if the recipient is not online; and

sending the response when the recipient is online.

25. A data processing system for collaboration, comprising:
- a memory having a program that receives a request to send a question either synchronously or asynchronously via a collaboration tool to a recipient, wherein the collaboration tool is capable of sending the question synchronously and asynchronously,
 - 5 determines whether the recipient is online, and sends the question to the recipient via the collaboration tool when the recipient is online; and
 - a processor for running the program.

26. A data processing system for collaboration, comprising:

a memory comprising a program that receives a first request to send a first file to a first recipient synchronously with a live session by a collaboration tool, sends the first file if the first recipient is online with the live session, receives a second request from a sender to send a second file to a second recipient asynchronously with a live session by a collaboration tool, queues the second file if the sender is not online until the sender is online, and sends the second file to the second recipient if the second recipient is online; and

a processor for running program.

27. The data processing system of claim 26, wherein the first request is received via a graphical user interface, and wherein the second request is received via the graphical user interface through which the first request was received.

28. The data processing system of claim 26, wherein sending the first file if the recipient is online further comprises the steps of:

detecting the presence of the first recipient to determine whether the first recipient is online; and

queuing the first file until the first recipient is online.

29. The data processing system of claim 26, wherein sending the second file further comprises the steps of:

detecting the presence of the second recipient to determine whether the second recipient is online; and

queuing the second file until the second recipient is online.

30. A data processing system for collaboration, comprising:

- a memory comprising a program that receives a request to send a question either synchronously or asynchronously via a collaboration tool to a recipient, wherein the collaboration tool is capable of sending the question synchronously and asynchronously,
- 5 determines whether the recipient is online, and sends the question to the recipient via the collaboration tool when the recipient is online; and
- a processor for running.

31. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a data processing system for collaboration to perform a method comprising the steps of:

receiving a first request to send a first question to a first recipient synchronously with a live session by a collaboration tool;

5 sending the first question if the first recipient is online with the live session;

receiving a second request from a sender to send a second question to a second recipient asynchronously with a live session by the collaboration tool;

queuing the second question if the sender is not online until the sender is online; and

10 sending the second question to the second recipient if the second recipient is online.

32. The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein sending the first question if the first recipient is online further comprises the steps of:

15 detecting the presence of the first recipient to determine if the first recipient is online; and

sending the question based on the determination.

33. The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein sending the second question if the second recipient is online further comprises the steps of:

20 detecting the presence of the second recipient to determine if the second recipient is online; and

sending the question based on the determination.

34. The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein the first request is received via a graphical user interface, and wherein the second request is received via the graphical user interface.

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35. The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein sending the first question further comprises the steps of:

setting a level of privacy for the first question.

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36. The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein sending the first question further comprises the steps of:

setting a level of anonymity for the first question.

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37. The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein the method further comprises the steps of:

receiving the first question; and

responding to the first question synchronously with the live session by sending an answer.

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38. The computer-readable medium of claim 31, wherein the method further comprises the steps of:

receiving the first question; and

responding to the first question asynchronously with the live session.

39. The computer-readable medium of claim 38, wherein responding to the first question asynchronously further comprises the steps of:

- detecting whether a sender of the response is online;
- 5 sending the response when the sender is online;
- detecting the presence of a recipient of the response to determine whether the recipient is online;
- queuing the response if the recipient is not online; and
- sending the response when the recipient is online.

40. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a data processing system for collaboration to perform a method comprising the steps of:

receiving a request to send a question either synchronously or asynchronously via a collaboration tool to a recipient, wherein the collaboration tool is capable of sending the

5 question synchronously and asynchronously;

determining whether the recipient is online; and

sending the question to the recipient via the collaboration tool when the recipient is online.

41. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a data processing system for collaboration to perform a method comprising the steps of:

receiving a first request to send a first file to a first recipient synchronously with a live session by a collaboration tool;

5 sending the first file if the first recipient is online with the live session;

receiving a second request from a sender to send a second file to a second recipient asynchronously with a live session by a collaboration tool;

queuing the second file if the sender is not online until the sender is online; and

sending the second file to the second recipient if the second recipient is online.

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42. The computer-readable medium of claim 41, wherein the first request is received via a graphical user interface, and wherein the second request is received via the graphical user.

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43. The computer-readable medium of claim 41, wherein sending the first file if the recipient is online further comprises the steps of:

detecting the presence of the first recipient to determine whether the first recipient is online; and

queuing the first file until the first recipient is online.

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44. The computer-readable medium of claim 41, wherein sending the second file further comprises the steps of:

detecting the presence of the second recipient to determine whether the second recipient is online; and

queuing the second file until the second recipient is online.

45. A computer-readable medium containing instructions for controlling a data processing system for collaboration to perform a method comprising the steps of:

receiving a request to send a file either synchronously or asynchronously via a collaboration tool to a recipient, wherein the collaboration tool is capable of sending the

5 question synchronously and asynchronously;

determining whether the recipient is online; and

sending the question to the recipient via the collaboration tool when the recipient is online.

46. A data processing system for collaboration, comprising:

means for receiving a first request to send a first question to a first recipient
synchronously with a live session by a collaboration tool;

5 means for sending the first question if the first recipient is online with the live
session;

means for receiving a second request from a sender to send a second question to a
second recipient asynchronously with a live session by the collaboration tool;

means for queuing the second question if the sender is not online until the sender
is online; and

10 means for sending the second question to the second recipient if the second
recipient is online.